



NEWS RELEASE

Indiana Criminal Justice Institute

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Governor's Council on Impaired & Dangerous Driving Joins State and Local Partners to Kickoff National Teen Driver Safety Week

Indianapolis, IN. – Nationwide, car crashes continue to be the leading cause of death among teens. In 2007, 153 teen drivers were killed on Indiana roadways alone. Research indicates that driver distractions are the primary cause of fatal collisions.

That is why the Governor's Council on Impaired & Dangerous Driving and the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute (ICJI) are joining with State Farm® Insurance, Indiana Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) and state legislators to promote National Teen Driver Safety Week from October 19-25.

On Monday, October 20 at 10:00 a.m. public officials, students and traffic safety advocates from across the state will hold a rally at the Indiana Statehouse to call attention to the importance of young driver safety and education. The event will serve as the statewide kickoff for National Teen Driver Safety Week and is backed by an official proclamation signed by Governor Mitch Daniels. As a visual component, 153 pairs of shoes will be displayed in remembrance of each teen killed in a motor vehicle crash on Indiana's roadways in 2007.

"The increasing number of teens driving on Indiana's roadways reinforces the importance of our role in supporting National Teen Driver Safety Week," said Neil Moore, executive director of ICJI. "As parents and educators, we should do what we can to teach young drivers about the life saving value of responsible driving and this campaign provides the perfect opportunity to do just that."

Earlier this month, state legislators approved a proposal to strengthen Indiana's teen driving laws, including at least 50 hours of supervised driving practice. Sen. Tom Wyss (R-Fort Wayne), chairman of the Interim Study Committee on Learner's Permits and Graduated Driver's Licenses, will introduce legislation during the 2009 Indiana General Assembly session.

National Teen Driver Safety Week is October 19-25, 2008

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Neil Moore, Executive Director

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“Communities can be devastated by teen driver crashes, and communities in Indiana are no exception,” said State Farm Vice President of Operations, Valerie Clinton. “Encouraging communication among teens, parents and community leaders is the first step in creating a safer driving environment for our teens.”

One of the greatest risk factors teen drivers face is the number of passengers in the vehicle. Studies have confirmed that with the presence of just one passenger, teens are twice as likely to be involved in a fatal crash. Few teens recognize the increased risk of a crash while passengers are present in the vehicle.

Parents and teens can learn more about the latest research and recommendations on safe driving for teens at www.BetterTeenDriving.com. For a complete list of events taking place around Indiana in support of National Teen Driver Safety Week please see the attached list.

Established by Congress in 2007 in response to the more than 5,000 teens that died in teen-driver related crashes on U.S. roads in 2006, National Teen Driver Safety Week promotes outreach efforts, such as “Ride Like a Friend” to encourage communities to support the families of young drivers.

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